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this medicine, should give it a full trial, and let well instructed physicians observe the effects.

The alcornoque has also proved effective in *liver complaints*. It is in these diseases that its medical qualities have been first discovered.

I judge it useless to dwell upon those circumstances; the chemical qualities which I have discovered in it, indicate sufficiently the reasons why this *root* has succeeded so well in hepatic diseases. This agrees perfectly with the rules established in the art of healing.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON THE VENERATION REALLY DUE
TO ANTIQUITY.

THE same subject viewed from different points, exhibits a very dissimilar appearance. In a court of justice, we are apt to think well of the cause, when it is first opened, till we hear what can be said on the opposite side. "Hear also the defendant," is a sound maxim in law and in literary discussion. In the last magazine, high praises were bestowed on indulging a veneration for antiquity. If I am not greatly mistaken, much may be said on the other side.

Who are our forefathers?—Some centuries ago they were savages, not higher in intellect and attainments, than the present inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. Gradually emerging from this state, they passed through the lower grades of civilization, and exchanged the rule of the bards for the scarcely more enlightened, or mitigated sway of another domination. Superstition changed its face, but still remained superstition under another form. Light gradually broke through, and men progressively advanced to higher

attainments. This is not an ideal picture, confined only to our ancestors, but is essentially characteristic of the progression which every country has made from barbarism towards refinement. We have certainly not yet reached that point, beyond which farther advances cannot be made. If in any of the preceding eras, the veneration for antiquity had been set up as a bar to farther improvement, the human mind must have become stationary, if not retrogressive, and a stop would have been put to all farther progress in knowledge.

The same effects would now follow, from an implicit adoption of the practices of our ancestors. Every race and age of men had their ancestors, whom if they had blindly followed, because they were their ancestors, there would have been an end to improvement, and such a procedure would be no more rational and fitting in us, than it would have been in them.

The fiction of a golden age, founded on the notion of the wisdom and purity of ancestors, has fled before the progress of superior knowledge, as the light and airy dream, and it has clearly appeared, that the early ages of all nations have been barbarous, and instead of being favourable to virtue, they have had a totally opposite character, and exhibited little more than the disgusting display of the grosser vices. In the infancy of society, there has been no golden age. It is only the dream of poets, and of fancy-led historians. Philosophers look forward for their golden age, to the spread of superior knowledge gradually ameliorating the state of man, and exalting the capabilities of the human mind towards the perfectioning of the species. May these fond hopes not be blasted, by man continuing always the sport of his passions, his

ignorance, and his unwillingness to be instructed.

Such fears will intrude, and lessen the confidence of philanthropy. Yet these fond expectations do not appear altogether without a solid foundation. The progress of knowledge is already so extensive, and especially the capabilities afforded to its still farther extension by means of the PRESS, seem to promise, that at least if we do not make progress, we shall never relapse again into barbarism, as in the instances of some nations, appears to have been the case. The present civilized portions of Europe, it is hoped, by no means, so long as the powers of the press are maintained, will ever so completely lose what they have gained, as has happened to the Greeks and Romans. Poets look back, and philosophers look forward for the age of improvement. A blind veneration for antiquity would tend to frustrate the hopes, I will not, according to fashionable phrase, condescend to call them, the dreams of philanthropy.

Barlow, in his *Columbiad*, unlike his poetical predecessors, joins the ranks of philosophers, and places his hopes in a future amelioration. His work will live to future ages, although not being sufficiently brought down to the mawkish taste of the day, it will probably not acquire much popularity at present,—

“Man is an infant still; and slow and late
Must form and fix his adolescent state,
Mature his manhood, and at last behold,
His reason ripen, and his force unfold.
From that bright eminence he then shall cast,
A look of wonder on his wanderings past,
Congratulate himself, and o’er the earth,
Firm the full reign of peace predestin’d at his birth.
Rome, Athens, Memphis, Tyre! had you but known
This glorious triad, now familiar grown.
The Press, the magnet faithful to its pole,

And earth’s own movement round her steadfast goal,
Ne’er had your science, from that splendid height,
Sunk in her strength, nor seen succeeding night.
Her own utility had forced her sway,
All nation’s caught the fast-extending ray.
Nature thro’ all her kingdoms oped the road,
Resign’d her secrets, and her wealth bestow’d:
Her moral codes a like dominion rear’d.
Freedom been born, and folly disappear’d,
War and his monsters sunk beneath her ban,
And left the world to reason, and to man.

But now behold him bend his broader way,
Lift keener eyes, and drink diviner day,
All systems scrutinize, their truths unfold,
Prove well the recent, well revise the old,
Reject all mystery, and define with force,
The point he aims at in his lab’ring course.”

The story of Mirza superstitiously worshipping the moon on the fifth day, according to the custom of his fore-fathers, which pleased so fully the fancy of your correspondent, reminds me of a story of a venerator of antiquity, who, more innocently showed his taste or perversity in an humble style. He was on the point of rebuilding his house, and resolutely determined to follow the plan of his fore-fathers. The stable according to ancient custom, was opposite to his front-door, and within a few yards of the only entrance to his house through the kitchen. By a little alteration, he might have had a beautiful situation for his new house. But on the proposed plan being explained, he quickly silenced all remonstrance, by briefly observing, “This situation answered very well for Wollie Moore’s grand-father, and for Wollie Moore’s father, and it shall do for Wollie Moore himself.” By arguments equally cogent, do the applauders of antiquity the-praisers of past times, often support their cause. They build on authority, and on precedent, but are sparing of supporting their asser-

tions on the basis of reason. They cannot claim much merit for their disinterestedness, for they only lend a little praise to their ancestors, in hopes of receiving, when they shall become ancestors, a full return in kind. A veneration for antiquity has cramped the energies of the human mind, and powerfully perpetuated errors from one generation to another. It is founded on that vanity, which induces many foolishly to prize, by a false and exaggerated estimate, those things which belong to themselves, merely because they are theirs. It was a good maxim which Ovid puts into the mouth of Ulysses, "Not to rely on our ancestors, or kindred, but to call our actions only our own."

Before we can give credit to senators for their wisdom in former times, or to preachers, for their praises of the faith of their ancestors, they must prove that the politics or creeds of former days have been pure. Magna Charta, the levying of ship-money, and the institution of the Star-chamber, are all the works of our predecessors, and yet entitled to very different estimation. Our ancestors have at different periods adopted opposite sentiments of religion, and could not be right at all times, and in all their changes, when the creed of one period was completely opposite to a former creed. Every question ought to be determined on its own intrinsic merit, and not on the adventitious claims of having obtained the sanction of those who have gone before us, and who were equally fallible with ourselves. Length of time throws an air which to those who look only at the surface, assumes an appearance of sanctity over decaying and morbid institutions. Reason removes the illusion, and points to higher destinies, as the rewards of patient and persevering research.

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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON READING ROSCOE'S TRANSLATION
OF THE NURSE.

ASSUREDLY, the nursing mother has the enjoyment of an additional sense; nor can nature, in all her extent and variety, present a spectacle more interesting, than the maternal nurse in the performance of this most delightful of duties, looking down on the infant that draws life from her bosom, and yields in return a sweetest, purest, but most indescribable sensation, partly revealed in the eyes and attitude, but which can neither be translated by the pencil of Raphael, nor the pen of Roscoe. It is this serene sensation, this placid but consummate love, which repays the mother for much previous suffering (suffering that perhaps heightens succeeding pleasure); and this is the compensation ordained for the daily cares, the nightly watchings, and the numerous privations of the nurse.

That most affecting transport which at one highly contrasted moment (perhaps the most so in human life) when a female is at once delivered from agony the most excruciating, and terror the most impressive, and hears the cry of her first-born, and exclaims feebly, yet forcibly—My darling child! *that* affecting transport *then* felt and manifested by the generality of mothers, gradually subsides into the quiet and retired delight which blesses the nurse; but this *secondary* sensation, or rather sentiment, I am unwillingly obliged to observe, is by no means so common, or so conformable to the minds or habits of many mothers. Let me assure those ladies who have read Roscoe, that it is much easier to be a mother than a nurse. Let not poetry excite feelings, transient tenderness, romantic fondness for a plain, serious, sweet, laborious *occupation*—let not, I say, the pleasures of the